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SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-second year

Letter dated 11 August 1997 from the representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from our Governments, we have the honour to submit herewith the joint statement resulting from the meeting between Franjo Tudjman, President of the Republic of Croatia, Alija Izetbegović, President of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and high officials of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina led by Vladimir Soljic, held at Split on 6 August 1997 (see annex).

We kindly request your assistance in distributing the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under item 47 of the provisional agenda, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Muhamed SACIRBEY
Permanent Representative
of Bosnia and Herzegovina

(Signed) Vladimir DROBNJAK
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
Permanent Mission of the
Republic of Croatia

* A/52/150 and Corr.1.

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Annex

Joint statement issued at Split, Croatia, on 6 August 1997

The delegation of the Republic of Croatia, led by President Franjo Tudjman, the delegation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, led by the President of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina Alija Izetbegović, and the highest officials of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, led by Vladimir Soljic, held a meeting in Split on 6 August 1997, at which they comprehensively examined the implementation of the Dayton and Washington agreements, the development of cooperation between the Republic of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in particular the strengthening of relations in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its cooperation with the Republic of Croatia.

The parties have jointly confirmed their readiness for consistent, comprehensive and accelerated implementation of the peace agreements in order to strengthen peace and establish functional democratic institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and overall normalization of relations in this part of Europe.

The parties have confirmed their joint commitment to the preservation and strengthening of the integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina, structured constitutionally as a State of three equal constituent nations and two multi-ethnic entities, which will strengthen reciprocal relations within Bosnia and Herzegovina and cooperate with neighbouring States in accordance with the Dayton agreements and the Political Declaration of the Peace Implementation Council in Sintra.

The implementation of the Washington agreement on the strengthening of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina considered by all a particularly important contribution to the peace process and an irreplaceable framework for the attainment of equal national, political and other interests of the Croat and Bosniac peoples.

An important role in the implementation of the Dayton and Washington agreements is played by the Council for Cooperation between the Republic of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which has had a positive effect on promoting the relations between the two States and strengthening cooperation between the Croat and Bosniac peoples, especially in affirming the policy of mutual confidence and reconciliation based on equality and mutual respect of national identity and other values. All the political, social, media and other institutions, communities and associations in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina are called upon to continue affirming the values of coexistence.

In order to promote cooperation on the basis of existing agreements, it has been agreed to exchange, by 1 September 1997, the draft agreement intended to regulate the relations between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina and to establish the council for cooperation between the two countries, and also the draft agreement on the establishment of the council for cooperation between the Republic of Croatia and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which will define special contractual relations between Croatia and the Federation of

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Bosnia and Herzegovina in accordance with the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Dayton and Washington agreements, the Sintra Declaration and the conclusions of the Office of the High Representative.

In the spirit of this mutual political commitment, it has been agreed that a special mixed legal-political group will, within three months, harmonize the signed bilateral agreements and prepare other agreements of mutual interest. In this process particular consideration will be given to the termination of negotiations on a permanent solution for the use of the port of Ploče and passage through the municipality of Neum, as well as to the agreement on property-legal relations, protection of investments, dual citizenship and so on.

The parties have confirmed the particular interest of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in strengthening economic cooperation. It has been agreed that an expert group will immediately prepare a programme of measures for promoting economic cooperation, balancing trade, amending the custom-free trade regime, in particular the trade in energy sources, and other issues related to the implementation of the Agreement on Economic Cooperation and Trade.

It has been agreed, through a special annex to the Agreement on Border Crossings, to allow immediately for the opening of new border crossings along the entire frontier. A joint border and customs post will be established at the border crossing Brčko-Gunja in accordance with the decisions of the Arbitration Commission. The preparation of the proposal for the arrangement and construction of joint border crossings will start immediately and international institutions will be invited to participate in the financing of specific projects.

Cooperation with the International War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague will continue. It is the joint conviction that the process of law and the trials should reflect an objective attitude towards the level of involvement of sides and individuals.

The parties reaffirmed the right to an organized, voluntary and safe return of refugees to their homes along with protection from intimidation and the adoption of the required legislation. The Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina will prepare, in coordination with the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and within the shortest time, an integral programme of return. The Government of the Republic of Croatia and the Government of the Federation will agree on the necessary steps for assistance in reconstruction and development in order to promote return. Particular emphasis was placed on the requirement to intensify overall activity in the discovery of persons missing during the war.

It was considered by all that the media play a particularly important role in developing a positive relationship towards the strengthening of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and overall implementation of the peace agreements. In this regard, the media are called upon to contribute to reaffirmation of confidence and reconciliation in the spirit of this statement and in accordance with the freedom and independence of the media.

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